

NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name **Snow Hill Colored High School**

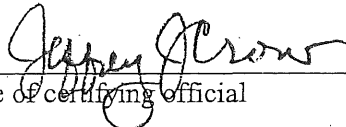
other names/site number **Greene County Colored Training School; Rosenwald Center for Cultural Enrichment**

2. Location

street & number **602A West Harper Street** not for publication **N/A** vicinity **N/A**
city or town **Snow Hill** state **North Carolina** code **NC** county **Greene** code **079** zip code **28580**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide X locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

 **SAPO**
Signature of certifying official

7/11/03
Date

North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ entered in the National Register

____ See continuation sheet.

____ determined eligible for the National Register

____ See continuation sheet.

____ determined not eligible for the National Register

____ removed from the National Register

____ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- ☒ private
☐ public-local
☐ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- ☒ building(s)
☐ district
☐ site
☐ structure
☐ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
3	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: **Education**
Recreation and Culture
Recreation and Culture

Sub: **school**
outdoor recreation
monument/marker

Present Functions

Cat: **Industry/Processing/Extraction**
Social
Recreation and Culture
Recreation and Culture

Sub: **manufacturing facility**
civic
outdoor recreation
monument/marker

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Other: Rosenwald School

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation	Brick
roof	Asphalt Shingles
walls	Brick

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | A | Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. |
| | B | Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | C | Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction. |
| | D | Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history. |

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A | owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | B | removed from its original location. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | C | a birthplace or a grave. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | D | a cemetery. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | E | a reconstructed building, object, or structure. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | F | a commemorative property. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | G | less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years. |

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture
Education
Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance **1925-1953**

Significant Dates **1925, ca. 1935**

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) **N/A**

Cultural Affiliation **N/A**

Architect/Builder **Unknown**

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

☒ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State agency

☐ Federal agency

☐ Local government

☐ University

☐ Other

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property **approx. 5.6 acres**

UTM References **Zone: 18**

Easting: 257400

Northing: 3925970

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title **Nancy Van Dolsen**

date **April 17, 2003**

street & number **1601 Highland Drive**

telephone **252.243.7861**

city or town **Wilson**

state **NC**

zip code **27893**

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name **Rosenwald Center for Cultural Enrichment, JoAnn A. Stevens, Vice-Chair/Lenoir Community**

College street & number **602A West Harper Street/818 Hwy 91** City or town **Snow Hill** state **NC**

zip code **28580**

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Snow Hill Colored High School, Greene County, N.C.

Narrative Description

The Snow Hill Colored High School, constructed in 1925, sits on a slight rise facing north overlooking West Harper Street in Snow Hill, Greene County, North Carolina. A low cinder block wall, with a hard, glazed brick coping, separates the school lot from the sidewalk and the street. Concrete steps lead from the sidewalk to a small monument erected by several Greene County schools to memorialize Mary M. Battle (1887-1918) who was the "Industrial Supervisor, Greene County Colored School" from 1914 to 1917. Mature shade trees are located along the perimeter of the property and between the school and an asphalt drive. The asphalt drive, leading to a parking lot at the rear of the building, separates the school from a baseball field to the east. A second school building comprised of a section built in 1952 that contains classrooms, a 1958 gymnasium, and an early 1960s cafeteria stands to the west of the original building and is not included within the National Register boundaries which comprise approximately 5.6 acres.

Snow Hill Colored High School, 1925, ca. 1935, contributing building

Snow Hill Colored High School is a one-story, seven-bay, common bond red brick building, with an "H"-shaped plan. A cornerstone graces the northeast corner and reads, "Colored High School erected 1925 by Board of Education, Greene County, B.W. Edwards, Chairman." Two gable-front wings are joined to a recessed side gable-roof central section. All of the gable roofs feature exposed rafter ends. Louvered vents are located at the peak of the gable end walls. The west wing has a six-classroom addition built onto the (rear) north gable end, ca. 1935, as indicated on the exterior by a brick parapet wall.

A one-story porch with simple Doric-style posts runs across the central section, protecting the entry. The five-bay central section features a double-door entry topped by a six-light transom; six six-light clerestory windows are located between the porch roof and cornice. A single door leads into both wings from the porch. As in all Rosenwald schools as originally built, the windows are large and are placed in multiple groupings. A basement was dug beneath the central section for the boiler and furnace, and it also served as the classroom for bricklaying. At the Snow Hill Colored High School the windows are in multiples of four, five, and six, on the west, east, and south elevations, and paired on the north elevation. Windows contain nine-over-nine sash. Original window sash and five-panel doors remain intact in the rear courtyard created by the two wings and central section. A one-story porch with square pillars runs the depth of each of the wings on the courtyard elevation.

Inside, the school originally featured three classrooms in each gable wing, office, library, and an auditorium in the central section. The office and library spaces, as well as the two cloakrooms in the central section, remain intact. The stage in the auditorium was removed during the late 1950s. The northern classrooms in each wing are subdivided at the north end to create a cloakroom;

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these cloakrooms are unaltered. The southern classroom in the east wing has been subdivided into three spaces, a passage, a classroom, and a bathroom; the other two classrooms in the east wing retain their original chalkboards. The three classrooms in the west wing have been made into one large space. The plan of the Snow Hill Colored High School was originally identical to "Floor Plan No. 6-A, Six Teacher Community School" found in the Rosenwald Foundation's *Community School Plans* bulletin.¹ With the exceptions noted above, the interior remains intact, complete with original five-panel wood doors, plaster walls, wood floors (under linoleum), and windows.

The addition to the rear of the western classroom wing included a central corridor flanked by three classrooms. The addition was constructed of common bond red brick and topped by a gable-on-hip roof. Windows in the addition are also in multiples of five or six and have nine-over-nine sash.

Mary M. Battle Monument, ca. 1925, contributing object

The granite obelisk stands approximately twelve-feet high on a three-part granite base and appears to have been erected ca. 1925 when the school was constructed. The small monument was erected by several Greene County schools to memorialize Mary M. Battle (1887-1918) who was the "Industrial Supervisor, Greene County Colored School" from 1914 to 1917.

Baseball Field, ca. 1935, ca. 1950 contributing site

The baseball field stands east of the school, down hill from the building, with the first base line parallel to the school. The baseball field was laid out ca. 1935. Wood bleachers and small concrete block and wood dugouts, dating to ca. 1950, are placed along the first and third base lines. A chain link fence denotes the end of the outfield. A high chain link backstop is located behind home base.

¹ Julius Rosenwald Foundation, *Community School Plans, Bulletin No. 3* (Nashville, TN: Julius Rosenwald Foundation, 1924) 17.

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Snow Hill Colored High School, Greene County, N.C.

Summary

The Snow Hill Colored High School meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion A under two areas of significance: education and ethnic heritage/black, and under Criterion C for architecture. Built in 1925 with funds from the Julius Rosenwald Fund, contributions from the local African American community, support from the Greene County School Board and the State Board of Education, the Snow Hill Colored High School was one of five Rosenwald schools constructed in Greene County between 1918 and 1925. From 1925 through 1953, the school served as an educational and social center for the African American community, hosting plays, glee club performances, adult education classes, movies, home demonstrations, and meetings between the county extension agent and farmers. The building also served as a training center for fledgling and established African American teachers in the county. Constructed as both an elementary and high school, it was also the first high school for African Americans in the county. Built to the specifications for a six-room school developed by the Rosenwald Fund, the Snow Hill Colored High School features multi-pane sash windows arranged in groups, a large open area that served as the auditorium and cafeteria, cloak rooms, the office, library, and industrial classroom. Less than fifteen percent of the 767 schools built with Rosenwald funds in North Carolina had six or more classrooms.

Historical Narrative, Education and Ethnic Heritage/Black Context

At the opening of the twentieth century, the educational system for African Americans in North Carolina, and throughout the south, was rudimentary at best. The public school system had officially segregated the races in 1875, declaring that there should be separate but equal educational facilities for white and black children. Not until 1910, however, did public elementary schools for blacks begin receiving state funds. In 1913, further recognizing the need to improve schools for black students, North Carolina established the office of supervisor of rural elementary schools to promote the education of African American children. In 1921, a separate agency, the Division of Negro Education, was created to further advance public education for black students.¹ A survey in the early 1930s conducted by the Division of Negro Education found that some black classrooms had 60 to 100 students, and that only half of the schools stayed in session for the full school year, and that only 7 percent of black students attended high school.²

Simultaneously, as North Carolina was working toward bettering education for its African American children, Julius Rosenwald, a Chicago philanthropist, started a fund for building new and modern school facilities for black students. Rosenwald (1862-1932), who made a fortune through his part ownership of Sears, Roebuck, and Company, became interested in aiding the

¹ Jeffrey J. Crow, Paul D. Escott, Flora H. Hatley, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina* (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1992) 154, 155.

² Crow, 135.

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African American community after reading two books, a biography of William H. Baldwin, a northern white man who devoted his life to promoting black education in the South, and *Up From Slavery*, the story of Booker T. Washington's life. In early 1911 he met with Booker T. Washington in Chicago, and later that year, toured Washington's Tuskegee Institute, which impressed him greatly. In 1912, he was made a trustee of Tuskegee.³

Rosenwald created his fund in southern education in 1917 with four funding priorities: the building of schoolhouses for rural African American children, the establishment of libraries, the education of teachers, and the development of centers for higher education for the black population.⁴ When Rosenwald established his fund, in the entire South there was not a single standard eight-grade rural black public school and no black public high school approved for even two-years of high school work. Where there were African American schools, they were open an average of four months a year, and the teacher usually had only attended school through eighth grade.⁵

For a community to qualify for support to build a school they needed to meet certain criteria. According to a publication printed by the Rosenwald Fund,

A school had to represent common effort by the state and county authorities and the local colored and white citizens. The state and county had to contribute to the building and agree to maintain it as a regular part of the public-school system. White citizens had to take an interest and contribute part of the money, since it was felt that white leadership was essential to the success of such a program in the South.... And the Negroes themselves had to show their desire for education by making gifts of money or labor, usually both.⁶

The buildings were to be constructed according to simple plans that were provided by the fund. The curriculum was to include formal and theoretical education and, as according to the principles of Booker T. Washington, students were also taught practical skills.⁷

The plans provided by the fund featured the most up-to-date pedagogical thought regarding the best spaces to help children to learn. Since the majority of schools were in rural areas with no electricity, maximizing natural light was a major concern. For this reason, the Rosenwald plans all featured groupings of tall, double-hung sash, classroom windows along the east and west walls. A southern exposure would be too warm during the late spring, summer, or early fall

³ Edwin R. Embree and Julia Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund* (Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1949) 5, 25-26.

⁴ Embree and Waxman, 37.

⁵ Embree and Waxman, 38.

⁶ Embree and Waxman, 39.

⁷ Embree and Waxman, 40.

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months; and northern light in the winter would not provide enough light. The plans also specified that each window should have two tan shades, to better regulate the amount and intensity of light. Windows were always to the children's left, so that a shadow would not be created as they wrote (except for left-handers). The interiors were to be painted either a cream ceiling with buff walls and walnut-stained wainscot or ivory cream ceiling with light gray walls and a walnut-stained wainscot. Interior corridors were to be minimized so that usable space was maximized.⁸

Each Rosenwald school also included an "industrial room," smaller than the standard-size classroom, for girls to be taught home economics and boys farm work and how to use simple tools. In addition, the school was to be used as much as possible by the public, and to that end, an auditorium that could seat the entire community should be built as part of the school. If there were not sufficient funds for an auditorium, a moving partition should be erected between two classrooms to create enough space for a large public meeting.⁹

Alabama was the first state to take advantage of the fund's support, and Tennessee, North Carolina, and Georgia soon followed. When the Fund closed its building program in 1932, North Carolina had received the greatest support and had constructed 813 buildings for 114,210 students at a cost of \$5,167,042.¹⁰ The fund had decided to end its building program not because it felt that its work was finished but they "felt that this particular demonstration had served its purpose of stimulating interest and must be discontinued in order that the southern states should not rely too heavily on outside aid and thus be delayed in assuming full responsibility for the schools...as an integral part of public provisions for the education of all people."¹¹

In May 1924, the Greene County Board of Education ordered that the Board "appropriate \$3000.00 for the establishment of a Colored Training School in Snow Hill for the benefit of the Colored teachers and prospective teachers of Greene County. This was to be used provided the colored district raises an equal amount."¹² Although the school was described as a "training school" for teachers in the minutes of the Board of Education, the building was used primarily as an elementary school for the African American children of Snow Hill and as a high school for all African American children in Greene County (as noted on the cornerstone); it was, however, also used as a training school for teachers.¹³ In October 1924, the minutes of the Board of Education recorded that the African American community had "raised \$2000 [most likely through the

⁸ Thomas H. Hanchett, "The Rosenwald Schools and Black Education in North Carolina," *The North Carolina Historical Review* Vol. LXV, No. 4, October 1988: 401.

⁹ Hanchett, 401-405.

¹⁰ Embree and Waxman, 51. In addition to schools, these buildings included teacherages, training schools for teachers, and shops; Hanchett, 444.

¹¹ Embree and Waxman, 57.

¹² Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, May 12, 1924.

¹³ Van Dolsen, Nancy. Interview with Ruth Boyd, Rev. J.W. Britt, Robert C. Britt, Patricia Pridgen Deans, Mary W. Foreman, Sara Suggs Guiles, Jennie E. Lucas, Hattie Sauls, JoAnn A. Stevens, Isolene Artis Taylor, August 8, 2002.

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Rosenwald Fund] of the \$3000 that they were to raise for the erection of the colored training school, and the time was extended fifteen days so that they may secure the remainder." The Board also authorized the chairman "to secure bids for the erection of the colored training school."¹⁴

By January 1925, the Board had moved ahead with their plans for constructing the school, and "after a discussion with Mr. Hufty and Mr. Credle of the State Department of Education . . . it was decided to build it out of brick instead of wood. The Chairman was authorized to get bids on material for the erection of the building."¹⁵ The next month the board decided to build the school in conjunction with the State Department of Education under the supervision of Mr. Hufty, "architect with the State Board of Education." The Greene County Board of Education thus saved the fee for a contractor to oversee the work. They also hired Mr. Birmingham (selected by Mr. Hufty) as the foreman of the work.¹⁶

In the April 1, 1925 minutes for the Greene County Board of Education, the members for the first time referred to the building as the "colored high school" and authorized expenditures for work completed.¹⁷ Less than a week later, the Board met again, and ordered that the Chair and the Superintendent of Schools meet with the Snow Hill town supervisors to try to get an extension of the sewer line to the "colored high school;" they also decided to meet at the new building at 2:00 P.M. that afternoon to view the building and to "make plans for the continuance and completion of the same."¹⁸ A little of a week later, they were working on "getting the colored high school wired for lights."¹⁹

In early May 1925, the Board ran short of money for construction on the new school, and authorized an application to the State Board for the loan of \$5,000 from the Literary Fund to complete the school. Despite their shortfall, the Board also awarded the plumbing contract for the building for \$634.44.²⁰

In late May, the Board contacted "the school supply men of the State . . . and ask[ed] them to send representatives" to bid on the furniture contract.²¹ On June 1, 1925, three "reputable school supply houses" met with the Board; and each received a contract:

¹⁴ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, October 6, 1924.

¹⁵ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, January 5, 1925.

¹⁶ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, February 17, 1925.

¹⁷ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, April 1, 1925.

¹⁸ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, April 6, 1925.

¹⁹ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, April 14, 1925.

²⁰ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, May 11, 1925.

²¹ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, May 25, 1925.

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Mr. Harris representing the Carolina School Supply Co., of Charlotte had the lowest bid on Black board, Teachers desks and chairs and was given the contract to furnish same. Mr. Eddinger, representing the Southern School Supply Co., of Raleigh, offered the lowest bid on steel desks and was given the contract to furnish same. Mr. Jervis, representing the General Seating Co., of Charlotte, N.C. offered the lowest bid on auditorium chairs and was given the contract for them. This furniture is to be shipped any time between this date and the 15th of Sept. 1925 and to be paid for not earlier than the 15th of October.²²

The Snow Hill Colored High School opened its doors to African American students in grades one through eleven in late September 1925. For the first time in Greene County, African American students could attend high school.

In Greene County, the Rosenwald Fund helped to build five schools, the total number of classrooms built was fourteen. Schools were built in the communities of Knox (a one-teacher school), Red Hill (a two-teacher school), Wattery Branch (a two-teacher school) and Zachariah (a three-teacher school), and the six-teacher brick school in Snow Hill.²³ The four smaller Rosenwald schools were constructed between 1918 and 1921 and served grades one through seven, and were only four of thirteen African American elementary schools in Greene County during the 1920s and 1930s.²⁴ Two schools have been demolished, but Zachariah School and Wattery Branch School still stand.²⁵

The plan for the Snow Hill Colored High School was provided by the Rosenwald Fund, and was designed as a six-teacher school. The brick school featured an "H" shaped plan. Two gable-front wings project forward, each containing three classrooms. The central section of the building had an auditorium, office, and "industrial" room for teaching practical knowledge to the students.

From its opening in 1925 until the early 1940s, the school housed grades one through eleven. During the 1920s and 30s there were eleven teachers (once the wing was constructed ca. 1935) and the principal also taught classes. The students ate their lunch in the auditorium; students in the home economics course helped prepare the lunches. The auditorium, during the 1930s and 1940s, also served as the screening room for popular films, such as the Hopalong Cassidy and Zorro serials. Since there were no theaters in the county (except in Snow Hill) that allowed

²² Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, June 1, 1925.

²³ Hanchett, 433.

²⁴ Van Dolsen, Nancy. Interview with Ruth Boyd, Rev. J.W. Britt, Robert C. Britt, Patricia Pridgen Deans, Mary W. Foreman, Sara Suggs Guiles, Jennie E. Lucas, Hattie Sauls, JoAnn A. Stevens, Isolene Artis Taylor, August 8, 2002. Hereafter referred to as "Interview with Graduates." Ruth Boyd, who both taught at the Snow Hill school and attended high school there, noted that there had been thirteen Greene County African American elementary schools.

²⁵ Interview with Graduates; telephone interview with Scott Power, September 30, 2002.

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blacks to attend, the school was the only place for farm children to see movies. The cost of attendance (collected by Mr. B.J. Brinson) was five pennies.²⁶

The school year began in late September and ran through May. Students recalled that often the male students who lived in the country could not attend school in September and October until harvesting was complete; this continued into the 1950s. The school day ran from about 8:00 A.M. until 3:15 P.M., except during harvest in the fall when the day ended at 2:00 P.M. The principal presented a devotional every morning, and chapel was held every Wednesday. Courses taught included American history, world history, English, mathematics, geography, home economics, brick laying and other construction skills, business, and typing. The State Board of Education provided textbooks which were discarded used books from the white schools; often there were not enough books for all pupils.²⁷

Before World War II, elementary students traveled upwards of five miles each way to attend school. In 1935 the parents purchased a bus; the school board would not provide a vehicle for the African American students. The bus drivers were all older students, and sometimes the bus rides could take two hours each way. High school students were from all areas of the county, so many had to board with other students in Snow Hill during the week, and go home only on weekends.²⁸

The teachers, as well, boarded with the families of their students, and many of the students felt that before World War II, the teachers showed "parental instincts."²⁹ Many graduates recalled that they felt loved by the teachers who gave structure and discipline, and instilled in the students that all children deserved to succeed.³⁰

During the 1940s, in addition to the academic curriculum, there was a glee club led by Mr. J.O. Daniels. He would play the piano, and the students would sing and accompany him with musical instruments created out of kitchen utensils. The 4H club also met at the school, and was led by the county extension agent. To raise funds for the school, farmers would donate crops they had harvested; these were sold to buy more books and buses for the school. Farmers would also hold "tobacco tying" parties that would be attended by all members of the African American community, including the teachers. The school also had a very active baseball team which played other schools in the area. The baseball field, dating to the 1930s, was an important part of school life and identity.³¹

²⁶ Interview with Graduates.

²⁷ Interview with Graduates. Memorable teachers included Miss Nettie Turner, Miss Sarah Giles, Miss Sarah Stanton, Miss Katie Smith, Miss Vela Holland, Mr. Dixon, Mr. Daniels, Mr. Brinson, Mr. Saxson, and Mr. Smith.

²⁸ Interview with Graduates.

²⁹ Interview with Graduates.

³⁰ Interview with Graduates.

³¹ Interview with Graduates.

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Sometime during the late 1930s or early 1940s, the 1925 building and its six-room addition became inadequate to house the expanding student body. The graduating class in 1932 was less than twenty but by 1956, the number of graduates in each class had more than tripled, numbering sixty-six. To house the additional students, a frame building, demolished in 2002, was built southeast of the original structure. This building housed grades two through six, and home economics classes were also held there.³²

In 1948 the African American community asked the County Board of Education if the county would assist them in raising funds for a physical education building at the Snow Hill school. According to the minutes of the Board,

The matter was discussed at length and the said patrons were informed that the board was in sympathy with their undertaking and that any building constructed would have to have the approval of the County Board of Education and the State Department of Education. The patrons were commended for their undertaking. The board made no commitments to the delegation, but said they would be glad to discuss this matter with them further at a later date.³³

Three years later, the Board of Education did approve the construction of two buildings on the property, one that would contain eight high school classrooms, science and homemaking labs, and four elementary classrooms, and a second building that would have a "gymnasium, stage & dressing rooms." The proposed cost of the two buildings was \$305,000; according to their budget, the state would provide \$185,000, the Board would provide \$33,000 (each of these were assigned to the first building), and they counted on the local community's \$87,500 that they had already raised for the gymnasium.³⁴

In February 1951, the Board of Education met to discuss how to fund their two upcoming building projects: six more classrooms and a cafeteria for the Snow Hill white elementary school with a cost of \$180,000, and the proposed improvements to the Snow Hill Colored High School campus. According to the minutes of the Board:

After discussing the current building program at length and apparently from every angle . . . the board voted unanimously to go back before the County Commissioners and asked them to provide \$45,000 in the 1951-1952 fiscal year It was the opinion of the board and Mr. William Coleman, Architect, that on the basis of present building costs that by cutting out the gymnasium and two primary classrooms that the Greene County Training School project could be built for the \$185,000 earmarked for that project, and that it would be necessary to get \$45,000

³² Interview with Graduates.

³³ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, December 8, 1948.

³⁴ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, January 12, 1951.

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from the Commissioners to add to the \$95,000 earmarked for the Snow Hill White project in order to build it and equip it.³⁵

In short, the Board decided to cut the project for the African American school and to not give the citizens what they specifically requested (a gymnasium). They also decided to completely fund the project for the white school.

The Board did receive additional funding from the County Commissioners to build the "Snow Hill White project." The Board of Education put out bids for the projects, and approved the bids to construct the "Snow Hill Elementary School" project for \$151,169.55 and for the "Snow Hill Negro High School" for \$184,529.46. The Board also requested from the "School Plant Construction, Improvement, and Repair Fund of the State of North Carolina" the full amount of the cost for the Snow Hill Colored High School improvements, but only \$102,000 for the Snow Hill Elementary School project since the County had been willing to contribute \$45,000.³⁶

By November 1951, both Snow Hill school projects were underway.³⁷ By March 1952, the Board of Education was adding more students to the "Greene County Colored High School." They decided that the students attending the Albritton Colored School and the Browntown Colored School would in September begin attending the enlarged Snow Hill Colored High School. The principal of the Snow Hill school warned, however, that there would need to be two or three additional buses "to stay within the legal capacity limits. He also further stated that even then most of the colored bus routes would be extremely long."³⁸

Although the members of the African American community were pleased with the new building added to the Snow Hill Colored High School campus, many were still upset that there was no gymnasium when there were physical education facilities at the white school. During the 1956-1957 school year, the students held a protest, led by Mrs. Dorie Farmer, Mrs. Moses Forbes, Sr., Mrs. Theodore Edwards, and Mrs. Inez Byrds, with the aid of the local National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (N.A.A.C.P.). The school buses did not run, and the students would not attend school until the Board of Education agreed to construct a gymnasium. The protesters achieved their goal, and a gymnasium was added to the façade of the 1952 classroom building the following year.³⁹ During the 1960s, a cafeteria was added to the rear of the 1952 building.

The original Snow Hill Colored High School building is presently used as a manufacturing facility for clothing, although there are plans to restore the building and use it as a community

³⁵ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, February 5, 1951.

³⁶ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, April 19, 1951.

³⁷ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, November 5, 1952.

³⁸ Greene County Board of Education, Minutes, March 3, 1952.

³⁹ Interview with Graduates.

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center. The 1952 classroom, 1958 gymnasium, and the 1960s cafeteria building is now owned by Lenoir Community College and presently houses educational programs for the county school system. Due to its age (most of the building is not yet fifty-years old), the 1950s and 1960s building is not at present eligible for the National Register.

Architecture Context

The Snow Hill Colored High School is one of five schools that were constructed using Rosenwald funds in Greene County; two other Rosenwald funded schools still stand: the Zachariah School, a three-room teacher school, and Wattery Branch School, a two-teacher school. The Snow Hill Colored High School was the only six-teacher school; the other Greene County schools were one-, two-, or three-teacher buildings.

Only forty (5%) out of the 767 schools constructed in North Carolina with Rosenwald funds were six-teacher schools; only fifty-nine (7.7%) had seven or more teachers.⁴⁰ The Snow Hill Colored High School is an excellent example of the types of school constructed according to plans provided by the Rosenwald Foundation. The school retains all of its original exterior finishes, and most of its interior finishes and these are as proscribed by the Rosenwald plans. The buildings features multi-pane sash windows arranged in groups, a large open area that served as the auditorium and cafeteria, cloakrooms, the office, library, and industrial classroom, all proscribed by the Rosenwald Fund. The building does not include corridors, thus allowing for the greatest amount of usable space; the large open room provides access to all of the classrooms. The building faces north, as recommended, so that each classroom would have the best natural light through the large windows.

The Snow Hill Colored High School's only variation from the Rosenwald specifications was its brick construction. The only modifications to the interior of the building since its construction in 1925 are the removal of the stage in the auditorium and the removal of the classroom partitions in the east wing.

The Snow Hill Colored High School is identical to the Riley Hill School (NR 2001), Wake County, which was also built according to the specifications for a six-teacher school as provided by the Rosenwald Foundation, modifying the Rosenwald plan by constructing a brick building. The stage and some interior partitions in the Riley Hill School were also removed.

⁴⁰ Statistics derived from Hanchett's compilation of known North Carolina Rosenwald School buildings; 428-444.

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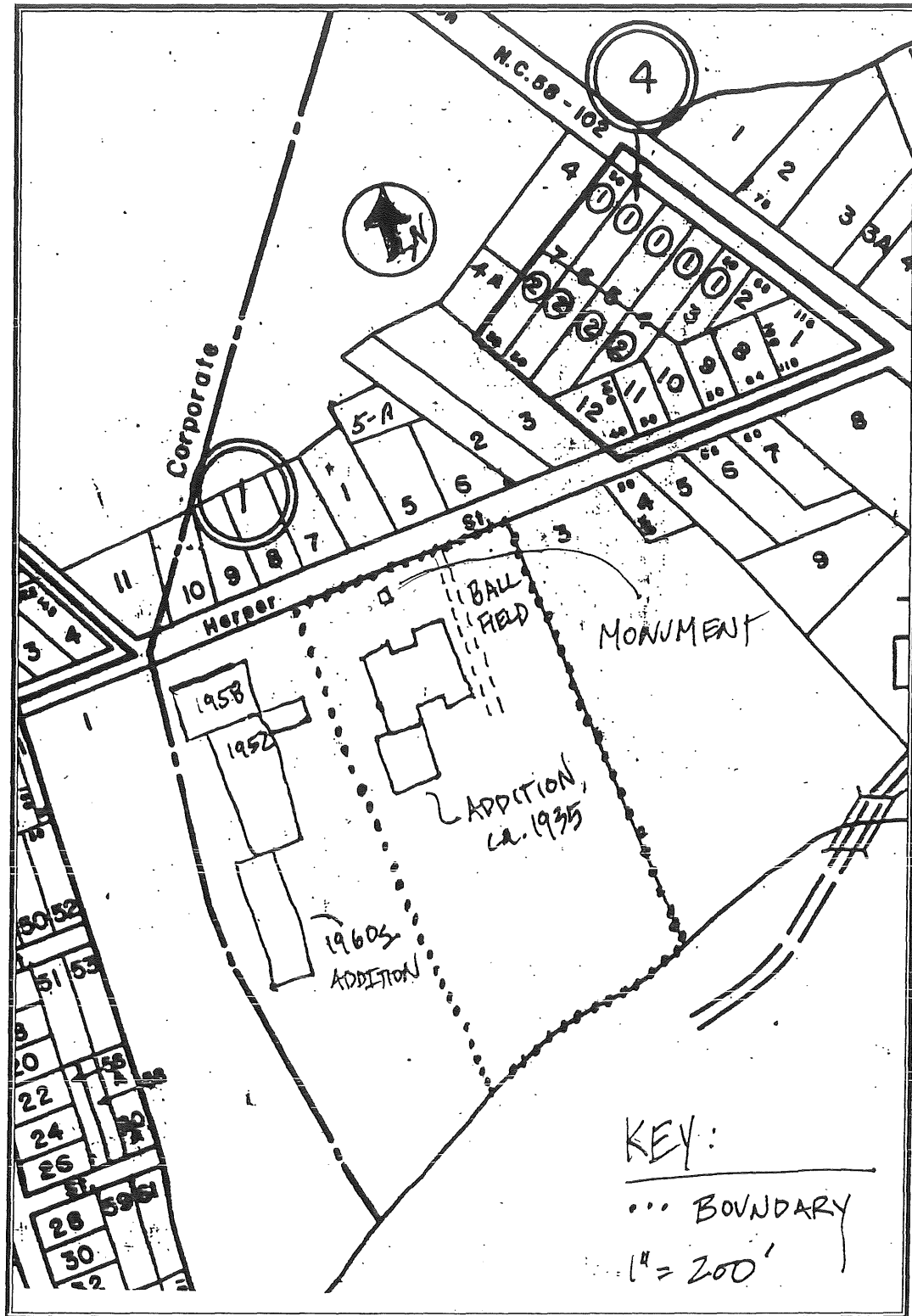
Snow Hill Colored High School, Greene County, NC

Verbal Boundary Description

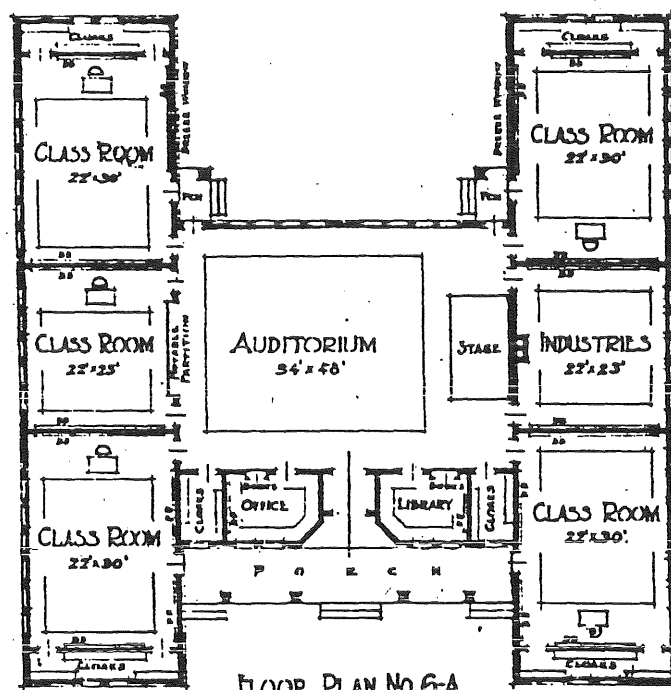
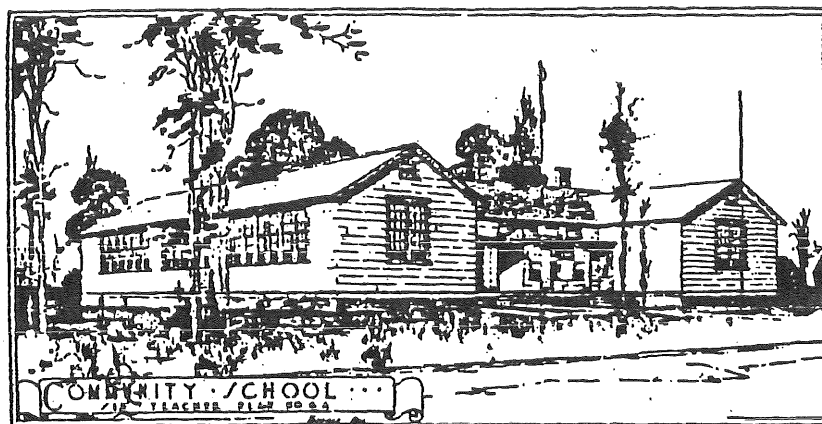
The boundary encompasses the original 1925 building, ca. 1935 wing, and school baseball field and is shown on the accompanying sketch map drawn at the scale, one inch equals 200 feet.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes the 1925 building (and its ca. 1935 addition) constructed with the Rosenwald funds and the accompanying baseball field, an integral part of school life during the period of significance, 1925-1953. The classroom, gymnasium and cafeteria building was not included since the much of the building dates to after the end of the period of significance.

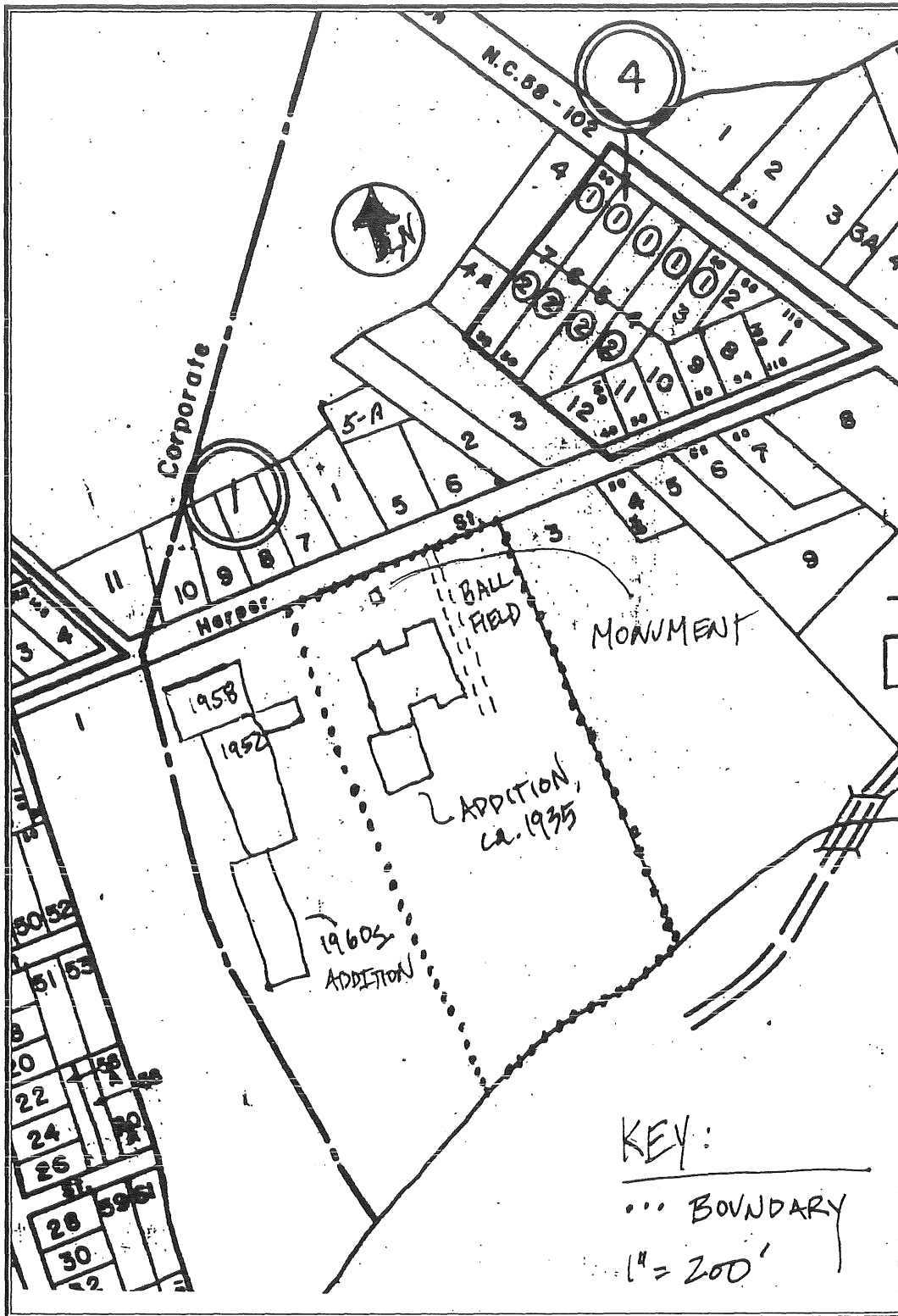


Tax Map showing National Register Boundary
Snow Hill Colored High School, Greene County, N.C.



FLOOR PLAN NO. 6-A
SIX TEACHER COMMUNITY SCHOOL
TO FACE NORTH OR SOUTH ONLY

Six-Teacher Community School Plan, Rosenwald Fund
Plan followed for the Snow Hill Colored High School, 1925
Snow Hill, Greene County, North Carolina
(from Julius Rosenwald Fund, *Community School Plans, Bulletin No. 3*,
Nashville, TN: 1924, 17)



Tax Map showing National Register Boundary
Snow Hill Colored High School, Greene County, N.C.

